

Protecting Your Home From Wildfire

If you are among the millions of people living near wildland areas, whether forests or rangelands, you are living in a naturally fire-prone landscape; and every year, thousands of homes are burned by wildfires. Don't let yours be one of them. You can take a number of steps to reduce your exposure to loss.

Although homes can ignite by contact with flames, a leading cause of home loss is flying embers, which can travel a half mile or more from the active fire. These embers land on flammable roofs, or under decks, or find their way inside a home through unscreened eave vents or other ways.

Think, Act in Zones Around Your Home

► **Zone 1: The Home Ignition Zone:** This is the area that includes your home and grounds immediately surrounding it, and is the most critical zone to maintain. This also is the area where flying embers can ignite and burn your house. Remove ember traps by screening all eave and other vents; cleaning all debris from under decks, and screen or enclose these areas. Move stacks of firewood away from the



Reduce Your Risk

- Trim tree limbs 6 to 10 feet up from the ground; and be sure no branches touch or overhang your house.
- Be sure all eave vents and other openings are screened.
- Be sure your access road or driveway is cleared enough for fire engines to access your site.
- Move woodpiles away from the house.
- Be sure shrubs and other vegetation within 30 feet of your home is spaced apart so they cannot carry fire from one to another.
- Clear all debris from underneath decks.
- Keep your roof and rain gutters clear of pine needles, dry leaves or other flammable debris
- Use Firewise landscaping designs and techniques.
- Keep weeds trimmed away from structures.
- Visit firewise.org for more tips.

structure. Remove pine needles, leaves, and other debris from rooftops and rain gutters. Trim weeds or other flammable vegetation, especially tree branches, back from touching or overhanging the structure.

► **Zone 2: Defensible Space Zone:** This circular area is a minimum of 30 feet from your house, and 100-feet or more on the downhill side if you live at the top of a slope. In this area: **Remove** dead and dying grass, shrubs and trees. **Reduce** the density of vegetation, by spacing plants apart, and remove "ladder" fuels that could carry fire from the ground into the treetops. **Replace** flammable vegetation with fire-resistant plants, green lawn, or other low-growing ground covers.

► **Zone 3: Fuel Reduction Zone:** Remove undergrowth and thin out densely-crowded smaller trees to reduce fire intensity. Experts recommend keeping a minimum of 10 feet of space between trees and shrubs. Trim low-hanging branches of mature trees up to six to 10 feet off the ground.

■ **Work with your neighbors.** If property lines limit your ability to manage the wildland fuels around you, work with your neighbors to create a fire-resistant neighborhood for the benefit of all.

■ **Don't wait until there's smoke in the air.** Every step taken before a fire occurs is one step closer to your home surviving. When a large fire threatens multiple homes, firefighters may be stretched thin, but steps you take beforehand will reduce your risk of loss. Often a well-prepared home can survive a wildfire on its own; and well-maintained property and access will assist firefighters in getting to and protecting your home.

■ **Be prepared to evacuate:** Keep valuable documents, photos, and heirlooms together. If a fire approaches, take these items and pets, close doors, windows and drapes, and leave when requested to do so.

For More Tips: www.firewise.org or www.nifc.gov